

MARGARET E. PIERCE.

AUGUST 8, 1890.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House and ordered to be printed.

Mr. GOODNIGHT, from the Committee on Invalid Pensions, submitted the following

REPORT:

[To accompany S. 3332.]

The Committee on Invalid Pensions, to whom was referred the bill (S. 3332) granting an increase of pension to Margaret E. Pierce, submit the following report:

The report of the Senate Committee on Pensions, which your committee adopt as their own, sets forth the facts in the case. It is appended hereto.

Your committee, in view of all the facts in the case, are of opinion that Mrs. Pierce's pension should be increased, and therefore return the accompanying bill with the recommendation that it do pass; amended, however, by striking out the word "forty" in line 4 and inserting therein instead the words "twenty-five."

REPORT.

The claimant, Margaret E. Pierce, is the widow of Henry H. Pierce, late of the Twenty-first Regiment United States Infantry. She was pensioned, on account of the death of her husband, at the rate of \$17 per month, beginning October 3, 1883, with an additional sum of \$2 per month for each of three minor children. She now asks that this be increased to the rate allowed the widows of officers of the rank of major, on the ground that such was the real rank of said soldier.

The accompanying petition is presented in support of this claim; and after a review of all the evidence in the case, your committee report back the bill, and recommend that it do pass.

Petition of Mrs. Margaret E. Pierce for increase of pension.

My husband, Henry Hubbard Pierce, was, during the entire war, a member of the First Connecticut Artillery. He entered a stripling of a boy as private soldier, and rose to the full rank of major of one of the best regiments in the service.

During continuous service of four years and five months he was three times brevetted. The first time was for "gallant and meritorious service in action at Petersburg mine," where he commanded a battery of 10 10-inch mortars, and where he was without intermission engaged from 4.45 a. m. till 10.30 p. m., and used for the first time the expedient of putting 30 12-pound canister shot under the bursting charge of the 10-inch shells, which proved of great utility, keeping quiet the most dreaded flanking batteries of the enemy's line. (Page 49, Adjutant-General's Report.)

Another brevet was for "conspicuous gallantry," a very distinguished and distinguishing compliment, given to only ten officers during the entire war.

This was conferred for "service in action at Graveyard Bend, Va.," where, with his own battery of 3 30-pounder Parrotts, and another of 4 20-pounder Parrotts under his command, unaided by our Navy, he repulsed the rebel fleet in its efforts to pass the obstructions in the James River on the night of January 23. This fleet consisted of three rams, the wooden gun-boat *Drury*, and a small torpedo boat. The second shot from the battery struck the *Drury*, and the third exploded her magazine, completely destroying her.

In this engagement he was wounded, with eighteen of his men. Of this affair General Henry L. Abbott, colonel of First Connecticut Artillery, says: "Too much praise can not be given Captain Pierce, commanding the battery, for his excellent conduct."

After this, a vacancy occurring, Captain Pierce was promoted to be major of his regiment. During that year his nervous system was entirely broken down by the use of quinine, which was issued as a ration, and from the effects of the exposure, which made so heroic a remedy necessary, he never recovered.

Although my husband did not die upon the battle-field, he is none the less a martyr to the cause, for it was to the labors and exposure undergone in the service that he owed his death.

As will be seen by accompanying "orders," he was engaged in an exploration which has opened up a hitherto unknown country. He laid down his life that others might find homes in the beautiful and fertile valleys of the Okanakin and Methow. The work imposed upon him, so peculiarly fitted for it in every other way than by physical strength, was more than his broken-down body could endure, and six days' march away from civilization he obeyed the last "order."

I have three children to rear and educate. The eldest will be sixteen in May, and will then forfeit her \$2 per month, at a time when every cent is so important in her acquisition of an education.

My pension is, including that of my three children, \$69 per quarter. I do most earnestly pray for an increase in this being granted, that I may be saved the struggle which confronts any woman left alone, without technical knowledge of any sort that might be applied to earning her own living.

MARGARET E. PIERCE.

MORGANTOWN, W. VA.,
February 26, 1886.

STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA,
County of Monongalia, ss:

The foregoing was subscribed and sworn to before me in my said county, and I hereby certify that the affiant is personally well known to me to be of undoubted credibility.

Given under my hand and official seal this 27th day of February, 1886.

[SEAL.]

E. SHISLER,
Notary Public.

[General Orders, No. 22.]

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE COLUMBIA,
Vancouver Barracks, Washington Territory, July 25, 1883.

The department commander announces with regret the death of First Lieutenant and Brevet Captain Henry H. Pierce, Twenty-first Infantry, while on special duty in the field, engaged in important topographical explorations, under special instructions from these headquarters.

The record of this officer is one of marked character and distinction, and his decease suggests special mention.

Entering the service for the preservation of the Government as a sergeant in the Fourth Connecticut Volunteers in May, 1861, he was promoted to the rank of major, rendering valuable and distinguished services, for which he was three times brevetted, on one occasion for "conspicuous gallantry."

At the close of the war he was commissioned a second lieutenant in the First United States Infantry, and subsequently, being transferred to the Twenty-first Infantry, was promoted to first lieutenant in May, 1874.

He possessed not only those qualities which grace an officer of the Government, but as a scholar he had few equals, and as an author he held high rank. His literary attainments were of the first order. The excellence of his translations of the Latin classics and his own compositions have already received marked testimonials and strong commendation from some of the most eminent scholars of the age.

During the past eight years he has served a good portion of the time at remote frontier posts, and has also been engaged against hostile Indians in the Northwest. In the autumn of last year he was engaged in a military reconnaissance in an unexplored district of Washington Territory, and at the hour of his death was occupied in completing the work then begun.

The exposure and hardships of military life in the great civil war and on the frontier had undermined his physical strength, and disease fixed its fatal hand upon him. He died at his post, in the field, in the line of duty, and his remains now rest, buried near the Upper Columbia River, mid the wild scenes of nature, far from friends and kindred.

In the death of Lieutenant Pierce the service has lost a most earnest and valuable officer, and the sympathy of the department commander is extended to his bereaved family.

By order of Brigadier-General Miles.

O. D. GREENE,
Assistant Adjutant-General.

[Regimental Order No. 49.]

HEADQUARTERS TWENTY-FIRST INFANTRY,
Vancouver Barracks, Washington Territory, August 9, 1883.

The colonel announces to the regiment the death at Foster Creek, Washington Territory, on the 17th day of July, 1883, of First Lieut. Henry H. Pierce, brevet captain U. S. Army, and brevet major of volunteers.

Captain Pierce entered the military service in May, 1861, as a sergeant of Company A, Fourth Connecticut Infantry, afterwards the First Connecticut Artillery, and rose through the several grades until he reached the rank of major in May, 1865. He was three times brevetted for gallantry on the field of battle, once for "conspicuous gallantry," while in command of a water battery on James River, Virginia, in 1865. His service in the field was continuous from May, 1861, to the surrender of the Confederate army at Appomattox, Va., April, 1865. He served at various times as judge-advocate and inspector-general of brigades. His brevets, one of them the most distinguished that can be conferred upon a soldier, and the testimonials of his superior officers, bear witness to his fidelity and courage; and frequent service in staff positions, requiring knowledge and tact, is evidence of his intellect and culture.

In October, 1867, Captain Pierce was appointed a second lieutenant in the United States Army, and assigned to the First Infantry, and while on duty in the State of Louisiana was appointed by Major-General O. O. Howard superintendent of education in that State. The duties of this important office he administered with integrity and intelligence. By direction of the President of the United States, he was detailed in the summer of 1869 on duty in the University of West Virginia, as professor of mathematics and military tactics, and remained in this position for a period of five years. On his promotion to the rank of first lieutenant in 1874, he joined his regiment and served with it at various frontier stations. He was in command of a company in the campaign of 1877, against the Nez Percé Indians, in the famous pursuit of Chief Joseph from the Lapwai to the Missouri River, and shares with his regiment the credit of having participated in one of the most remarkable marches recorded in modern warfare. In 1878-'79 he was professor of military science in the military school at Orchard Lake, Mich. October 1, 1880, Captain Pierce was appointed adjutant of the Twenty-first Infantry, and served in this capacity until October 14, 1882, when he resigned to accept the detail of professor of military science and tactics in Pacific University, Oregon, for which position he was recommended by the department commander. While adjutant he was detailed by Brig. Gen. Nelson A. Miles, commanding Department of the Columbia, to command a scientific exploring expedition from old Fort Colville to Puget Sound. This duty was discharged in a manner so satisfactory that his report of the exploration was published by order of the honorable Secretary of War, on the recommendation of the General of the Army. Family afflictions compelled Captain Pierce to resign his professorship and to return to his regiment in February last. At the time of his death he was in command of a second exploring expedition, having for its object the reconnaissance of the unexplored country between the Columbia River and Puget Sound, along a line south of the forty-ninth parallel. The estimation in which he was held by the department commander has been published to the world in the department order announcing his decease. Captain Pierce, though he was never actively engaged in that profession, was educated for law. He was an original writer of distinction, and made translations of the "Æneid" of Virgil and the "Odes" of Horace, productions of the highest literary merit. His life was one of honor and usefulness. The spirit which led him, amid the cares and annoyances of army routine life, to undertake literary labor was commendable in the highest degree, and is worthy of imitation.

As a mark of respect to the memory of Captain Pierce, the officers of the Twenty-first Infantry will wear the usual badge of mourning for thirty days.

By order of Col. H. A. Morrow.

DANIEL CORNMAN,
First Lieutenant and Adjutant Twenty-first Infantry.